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THE INHERITANCE OF A GOOD MAN's CHILDREN.

A

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BEFORE THE SOCIETY INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SONS OF THE CLERGY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

BY

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A

SERMON, &c.

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A GOOD MAN LEAVETH AN INHERITANCE TO HIS CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

IT is an intereſting and indiſputable truth, that the happineſs of men depends leſs on their external conditions than on their perſonal virtues and their general habits. "A good man is ſatisfied from "himſelf;" and peace of conſcience and truſt in God are more and better than all riches.

It is the doctrine of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who came down from heaven to bleſs mankind and to ſave them. "Bleſſed

(he ſays) are the poor in ſpirit—bleſſed are they that mourn—bleſſed are the meek—bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs—bleſſed are the merciful—bleſſed are the pure in heart—bleſſed are the peace-makers—bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake." He repreſents the character of a good man in the detail; and the combined reſult of the ſeveral parts, is confirmed by the experience of ages in every condition of human life. " The kingdom of God " is righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in " the Holy Ghoſt."

But beſides the perſonal happineſs which a good man enjoys, this text affirms that the effects of his habits are tranſmitted to his children, and even to their deſcendants. Though he ſhould have neither wealth nor rank to convey to them, it ſuppoſes that what they derive from his character is a ſufficient and a permanent inheritance. Solomon refers chiefly to the proſperity of this life: and contraſting the advantages which " a good man leaves to his

" children's

" children's children," with the uncertain tenure of riches poſſeſſed without principle and without morals, he affirms, that " the " wealth of the ſinner is laid up for the " juſt." The providence of God ſmiles on the induſtry and virtue of a good man's children, and leads them on to proſperity and wealth; while the families of unprincipled men are degraded by their miſconduct from the condition which they inherit from their fathers.

I ſhall firſt conſider the doctrine of the text, and then the practical concluſions which it ſuggeſts to us.

I. THE inſtruction of a good man is an inheritance to his children.

Our happineſs, and even our proſperity in the world, depend more on the culture of our youth than on all the external advantages which can belong to our conditions. The habits which a man acquires under his father's eye, are the foundations of his cha-

racter. He who has trained his ſon "in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," to godlineſs, and truth, and juſtice, and fidelity; to reſtrain his temper, and to govern his tongue; to ſubject his intereſt to his duty, his paſſions to his conſcience, his inclinations to his underſtanding; leaves him in poſſeſſion of the moſt permanent advantages of human life. Whatſoever his condition ſhall be, he has the means of proſperity in his hands; and the moſt certain ſources of ſatisfaction in the enjoyment of whatſoever he acquires. Even talents are ſubordinate to virtues; and good affections are of more importance in human life than the moſt ſplendid ornaments of an unprincipled mind.

It is not in every man's power to add to the habits on which the religious and moral character depends, the principles of liberal knowledge, and the views of a liberal mind. But he who has done this, ſends his children into the world with thoſe precious endowments, without which the wealth of the rich ſerves only to render them

them more conſpicuouſly contemptible or unhappy.

Men of the ſame worth are not equally qualified, and their children have not the ſame advantages. But there is a minuteneſs and an affection in the paternal care of a good man, which ſupplies the want of many talents; an earneſtneſs and a purity of deſign, which is conſecrated in the minds of his children, and leaves indelible impreſſions. They venerate his intentions, even where his judgement has failed him. They look back on his ſolicitude and on his faithful admonitions, with an affection and reverence which the ſucceſſion of years does not deſtroy. In their ſtruggles betwixt principle and temptations, they hear his voice from the tomb; and if they perſiſt in the path of duty, or are ſucceſsful in the purſuits of life, it is their pride and their conſolation, that they reap the fruits of his paternal labours and of his laſt inſtructions.

II. The example of a good man is an inheritance to his children.

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The character of a father lies at the foundation of his influence, and the effect of his paternal ſolicitudes depends on it. His habits are his moſt ſucceſsful admonitions; and the examples of religion and probity which his children receive from the general tenor of his temper and conduct, are his moſt permanent inſtructions. He who has gone before his children in the path of duty, and has ſhewn them in his own conduct the effects of godlineſs and of integrity in practice, leaves on their minds impreſſions of his character which remain with them through life, and which intereſt and determine them in the moſt trying ſituations. If he has convinced them that he derives his motives and his conſolations from the ſincerity of his faith; that where the caſe requires him to chooſe, he allows no competition to be in his mind betwixt the praiſe of men and the approbation of God; betwixt "the wages of iniquity" and "the teſtimony of a good conſcience;" betwixt the conſiderations of ſelfiſhneſs and the pride of life, and the

opportunities

opportunities of being uſeful to other men, or the habit of good works; betwixt the utmoſt gratifications of pleaſure or ambition, and the ſubſtantial ſatisfactions which ariſe from purity of mind: if he has given theſe impreſſions of his character to his children, his example does more to determine their habits than his beſt inſtructions: They remember him with tenderneſs and awe, when ſinners entice them: They think of him with an honourable pride, when their conduct is worthy of his character and of his hopes: When his head is laid in the duſt, they cheriſh his memory, to ſtimulate and to guide them in the path of duty; and when they have learned to think and to act for themſelves, they trace back to the effects of his example both their proſperity and their virtues.

Even thoſe who have loſt their fathers before they could reap the benefit of their examples, hear of their virtues with a generous ardour, as precious memorials to them in the path of life. The living ex-

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amples given by a good man to a dutiful ſon, are practical leſſons to enforce the inſtructions of his youth, to teach him the application of principle to conduct, and to form his views of life and his habits of acting. They are ſealed on his heart by his filial affection, and he cheriſhes the remembrance of them as the foundations of his character. Even a degenerate ſon feels the awe of his father's virtues; they operate early as a reſtraint, and have much more influence than is always ſeen; and ſometimes too, by the grace of God, they operate at a later period, to convince him how far and how fatally he has erred.

There are certainly defects in all human characters, which render our beſt examples to our children very imperfect; and errors adopted in practice muſt be admitted to have more pernicious conſequences than the worſt defects of general inſtruction. But it will be obſerved, that the habitual errors of a good man are not vices, and that defects or infirmities prevent not the influence of ſubſtantial virtues. It is of more

more importance to add, that it is in the order of Nature and Providence, that the defects of a father ſhould be ſeparated in the minds of his children from his better qualities. They do not allow themſelves to dwell on his infirmities, of which they are not ignorant, and they loſe the recollection of them. But their imaginations and their affections conſecrate the memory and the example of his virtues.

The beſt advantages may be loſt; and ſucceſs in life is not always the effect of the moſt probable means of attaining it. There are exceptions to every general cauſe of proſperity which can be mentioned, ariſing from the perverſion of individuals, or from the deſigns of Providence. But it is as certain, that the characters which have been formed by the faithful inſtruction and pure examples of good men, are accompanied with advantages to thoſe who poſſeſs them, both for the duties and for the happineſs of active life, which nothing elſe can confer on them which they inherit from their fathers. Virtue and probity

cultivated into habits, if there are any talents united to them, are the beſt ſecurities for the fidelity, the induſtry, the reputation, and the ſucceſs which place men in proſperous conditions. Every wiſe man regards them as ſolid and permanent advantages, and labours to tranſmit them to his children; and even unprincipled men feel their importance, though their perſonal characters deprive them of the means of conveying them.

III. The care and protection of Providence are an inheritance to a good man's children.

A good man certainly neglects none of the means which his ſituation affords him to qualify his children for the buſineſs and the duties of life, and to promote their proſperity in the world. But uſing his utmoſt endeavours, his chief dependence is on Providence. He commits his children to God. He expects from him the protection and proſperity of which no human foreſight can aſſure them. This is a certain and perpetual

perpetual reſource. His paternal labours are ſanctified by prayer. The ſolicitudes of a father give place to the faith of a Chriſtian. He relies on the records of inſpiration, illuſtrated by the experience of all the ages; and commends his children to the God of his fathers, aſſured of his faithful promiſe: "Leave thy fatherleſs chil-
"dren, I will preſerve them alive—The
"mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting
"to everlaſting upon them that fear him,
"and his righteouſneſs unto children's
"children—When my father and mother
"leave me, then the Lord will take me up
"—I have been young and now am old,
"yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſa-
"ken, nor his ſeed begging bread." The prayer of paternal love is not in vain ſanctioned by theſe indelible records: "The
"promiſe is to us and to our children;" and the children of the faithful are holy as the heritage of the Lord. The prayers of a devout man, purified by faith and by good works, are remembered before God

for the children whom he hath given him.

It is a law of Providence, as well as the ſanction of God's commandment, that God "ſhews mercy to thouſands of them "that love him," and to their children after them; and, for the ſake of faithful men, hath compaſſion even on the wicked and the hardened. And this law is written on the hearts of the people, ſo as to render them conſcious of the claims of a good man's family when their condition is underſtood, and to intereſt in their proſperity even thoſe who have not known them.

The experience of ages ſhews that this law hath its full effect, and warrants the confidence with which devout men commit their children to God. The hiſtory of human life is the record of Providence; and it is not the leaſt intereſting volume of the record, which contains the events by which Providence hath raiſed up the children of the faithful beyond all the hopes of their fathers. One man ſends forth his children into

into the world without wealth and without friends, with no advantages but the inſtruction he has given them, and his bleſſing, and his prayers: and the hand of the Lord is with them; and they proſper in their honourable labours; and they gain the eſteem and confidence of ſtrangers; and God raiſes up a friend when they need his help; and the courſe of unforeſeen events opens to them a ſucceſſion of new reſources; and they reach a condition to which they were not born; and they return with wealth and honour into the boſom of their father's houſe; and he lives ſtill, to give thanks to the God of his fathers; and his latter days are happier than his firſt. Another man has only lived to embrace his children, and to commend them to God. They are helpleſs infants, caſt on the care of Providence; but they are choſen to be eminent examples of the faithfulneſs of God. He raiſes up men of different views and characters to fulfil to them the duties of a father: by their means they enjoy more liberal advantages than

than their parents could have given them; and even the circumſtance which has deprived them of the benefits of paternal care, is uſed by Providence to aſſure them of the means of proſperity: They become more the objects of attention than they would have been in their original ſituation; they enjoy opportunities of exertion and ſucceſs, from which a more proſperous beginning would have naturally excluded them; if they experience the help of their father's friends, they are as often indebted to the kindneſs of a ſtranger; they are able at laſt to bring forward one another, and to be uſeful to other men; and they remember together, with affection and reverence, the virtues and the prayers of a father which Providence hath recompenſed to them.

The conduct of Providence, in ſimilar caſes, is too much diverſified to be repreſented in detail. But if we ſhall look into the various departments of human life, and conſider by whom they are occupied; if we ſhall recollect the hiſtory of the worthy,

thy, the active, the proſperous, the opulent men, we ſhall find that no ſmall proportion of them have been the children of Providence. We ſhall ſee among them men who have derived nothing from their fathers but the effects of paternal virtues; men who have been brought forward by the help to which they were conſcious of no claim, and of which they had no natural expectation; men who have been indebted to events which are denominated the accidents of life, which, though unforſeen by men, are the decrees of God; men who have found patronage and protection where they leaſt expected them, and at the moſt critical ſeaſons, and whoſe ſucceſs has exceeded all their computations; men who look back with complacency on the humble ſphere in which their fathers ſerved God, " in the labour of love" and of good works, and who have the pure ſatisfaction of believing, that " their pray-
" ers and their alms have gone up to Hea-
" ven as a memorial" for them.

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We do not always acknowledge the agency of Providence in the events of which we can trace the ſecond cauſes, and we enjoy our proſperity without reflecting on the ſource of it. But the doctrine is not affected by the irreligion or incredulity of men. Though we ſhould not reverence the hand that guides us, "he is faithful "who hath promiſed;" and "though we "believe not, he abideth faithful."

The plan of Providence is not ſo uniform, that the children of good men ſhould be always proſperous. The general laws which influence human affairs are not ſuſpended for the benefit of individuals; and their own miſconduct often determines their conditions. The children often ſuffer from the improper management of their early education, originating not from the intentions, but from the miſtakes of their parents. The moral diſcipline, too, which they require, and the purpoſes which Providence hath choſen them to accompliſh, are often inconſiſtent with the proſperity which they do not attain. There

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are alſo other children of Providence, beſides the families of the faithful.

But with all theſe exceptions, of which we can eaſily perceive the extent, there is a ſufficient number of facts, eſtabliſhed by the experience of many generations, and obvious to the attention of every devout mind, to illuſtrate the general doctrine, that the children of a good man are objects of the peculiar care and protection of Heaven; that uſing his beſt endeavours to promote their proſperity, he is juſtified by experience in the confidence with which he reſigns their lot to God; that Providence is to him a reſource of which no ſituation can deprive him, and is the chief inheritance of his children.

We can ſee the families of unprincipled men ſuffering the conſequences of their depravity, and by the courſe of events, as well as by their own miſconduct, falling from the condition in which their fathers had placed them. The providence of God ſcatters the accumulations of avarice and violence, and, according to the

ſanction of the divine law, "viſits the ini-
" quities of the fathers upon the children,
" unto the third and fourth generations."
But the effects of virtue and probity are permanent; and amidſt all the variety of purſuits and conditions which diſtinguiſh the children of good men in this world, they reap the bleſſing of their fathers after many days. I add,

IV. THAT the kindneſs of faithful men is an inheritance to a good man's children.

With all the advantages with which a father can ſend his children into the world, their ſucceſs muſt in a great meaſure depend on the aſſiſtance and the friendſhip of other men; and the purpoſes of Providence in their favour are accompliſhed by means of men whom God raiſes up to guide them in the path of life. But the hearts of men, as well as the courſe of events, are in the hands of God, and he ſelects the inſtruments of his purpoſe from all the condi-

tions

tions and characters of human life. The ſelfiſh, the envious, the deceitful, the profligate, are ſubſervient to him; and furniſh (often indeed from bad motives, and as often without intending it,) both the occaſions and the means by which the children of Providence reap the inheritance of their fathers. But the kindneſs of men who are guided by principle themſelves, to the children of thoſe who have been faithful in their generation, is a department of duty which belongs to their proper characters, enforced by the ſpirit and by the laws of religion. It is one of the moſt intereſting forms in which one good man can meet the affections of another, or acknowledge the relation which unites them. The protection given to the children, is more than friendſhip to their father. It is the diſintereſted homage due to purity of principle and to good works, or it is the active teſtimony of an upright mind to the memory of departed virtues. "Whoſoever," ſaith our Lord, "ſhall do the will of my Father

" who is in heaven, the ſame is my bro-
" ther, and ſiſter, and mother." The ſa-tisfaction of contributing, from a ſenſe of duty, to recompenſe to the children the godly ſincerity of the father, and his contentment, and his " labour of love," is a pledge to a man himſelf that his own mind is pure. It is love to a diſciple, " becauſe he " belongs to Chriſt." It is the " charity, " which is the end of the commandment, " out of a pure heart, and a good con-
" ſcience, and faith unfeigned." We owe the offices of humanity to men of all characters and kindreds, as the children of that God " who hath made of one blood " all the nations of men;" and the ſpirit of active benevolence which Chriſtianity hath ſpread among the nations, and which has at leaſt as much energy among the men of the preſent time as in all the former ages, is a permanent barrier raiſed up by the Son of God for the protection of the helpleſs and the orphan in all the conditions of human life. But the benevolent attentions which we owe to the families of

good

good men, beſides the obligations they derive from the conſiderations of humanity, are enforced upon the conſcience, (like every thing elſe which belongs to "the love "of the brethren"), as the teſt of vital Chriſtianity in ourſelves; as the pledge of our union to "the houſehold of faith," and of our relation and fidelity to Him "who is the head over all things to the "church," and "who gathers together in "one the children of God." "We know," ſaith the Apoſtle John, "that we have "paſſed from death to life, becauſe we "love the brethren;" and "inaſmuch," ſaith our Lord, "as ye have done it to "one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, "ye have done it unto me." It is an idea which has a peculiar energy in the mind of a man whom "the love of Chriſt con-"ſtrains," and whom the law of Chriſt determines, that his affection to the children ſhall be a pledge of his union to their father in "the houſehold of God," and of his relation to their Maſter and his. Our children are more precious to us than all the

proſperity

proſperity of human life; and it muſt be ſtrong conſolation to a father's heart, to believe that a memorial for his family is written on the conſcience of every man "who loves our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſin-"cerity." To the children, it is an inheritance "better than the riches of many wic-"ked," on which they have a right to rely, in proportion to the progreſs of practical Chriſtianity among men, and to the power of the doctrines of Chriſt over the minds of the faithul.

The obligations I have repreſented are indiſputable. And though, from the imperfection of human virtues, and our imperfect knowledge of one another, the effects may not be as extenſive as they ought to be, I truſt and believe, by the goſpel of Chriſt, that when "the redeemed of the "Lord ſhall be gathered," and the fathers, and the children, and the benefactors, ſhall be aſſembled together, this branch of fidelity, and of "the labour of love," ſhall not be found the leaſt in the kingdom of God. With the beſt intentions, our judgements

may

may miſlead us; but that which is "done "to a diſciple, in the name of a diſciple, "ſhall in no caſe loſe its reward."

"A good man leaveth an inheritance to "his children's *children*." And if the doctrine of this text hath been in any degree illuſtrated, it is eaſy to ſee how the inheritance of the ſons becomes the portion of their children. The ſame general characters, as well as the effects even of one man's proſperity, are tranſmitted through many generations. Every man has made the obſervation, that the diſpoſitions of the anceſtor are found in his deſcendants; and that a man who perſeveres in the habits to which his fathers have formed him, teaches them ſucceſsfully to his children after him. It is not leſs obvious, that the virtues of a family will often prevail againſt the vices of an individual: they will ſave himſelf from the degradation which he has really deſerved, and they will reſcue his children from the effects of his example. The proſperity of one race is known to be preſerved through ſucceſſive generations,

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long after the children have fallen from the virtues of their fathers; and though there are many other rules by which the wiſdom of God determines the lot of men, a devout man will often find reaſons for believing, that the indulgence of Providence, continued to unworthy individuals, is to be traced to the memory of thoſe who were before them, and to the covenant of the Lord in behalf of their deſcendants.

It is one of the moſt ſplendid conſiderations which can animate the efforts of a benevolent mind, that the ſmall but faithful offices of kindneſs done to the child of a good man, may, by God's providence, and according to his faithful promiſe, become the means of tranſmitting virtue and proſperity through ſucceſſive generations.

I have ſaid all that I propoſed on the doctrine of the text Let us now attend to the practical concluſions which it ſuggeſts to us. The extent of the ſubject is beyond the limits of one diſcourſe; and I muſt

confine myſelf to the moſt obvious remarks, without attempting to purſue them.

1. The doctrine ſuggeſts to every one of you who is a father, his indiſpenſable obligation to give to his children the inheritance of the faithful.

Their happineſs and proſperity depend more on your perſonal habits than on all your induſtry, and than on all your wealth. The unprincipled manners of a father not only deprive his children of the beſt advantages of paternal love, but of all the ſubſtantial effects of paternal virtues. Their conſequences to himſelf reach from this life to the life that never ends; and their pernicious influence on the character and condition of his family, may be extended through diſtant generations.——On the other hand, the tenderneſs of parental affection adds the moſt animating conſiderations to the obligations of our faith, and of our moral duties. The moſt important intereſts of our children depend on the habits and diſpoſitions which they ſhall de-

rive from us. If we ſhall be faithful to God and to them, we may live to enjoy their virtues and their proſperity; or if Providence ſhall deny us this ſatisfaction, we ſhall die at leaſt in peace, leaving them with confidence to the God of their fathers, and our names ſhall be remembered with eſteem and honour among their deſcendants.

2. THE doctrine ought to teach the children of good men, how much they are bound to preſerve the moral and religious advantages which they have received from their fathers.

It is indiſpenſably binding on them to maintain the character of their fathers houſe, that their poſterity may inherit the bleſſing which hath come down to them; to poſſeſs with gratitude to the God of Providence the proſperity which he hath given them for the ſake of their fathers; to give examples of godlineſs, of fidelity, and of good works, worthy of the race of which they are deſcended; and that the name and the inheritance of their fathers

may

may be permanent, as " he is faithful who " hath promiſed," " to command their chil- " dren, and their houſehold after them, to " keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice " and judgement." There are no advanta- ges which may not be abuſed and forfeited; and the perverſion of the children of faith- ful men, while they enjoy the effects of the virtues of their anceſtors, has peculiar aggravations. I add,

3. THAT the doctrine ought to bring home to our conviction the obligation which lies on us in our ſeveral depart- ments, to contribute to the utmoſt of our power to enſure to the children of good men the inheritance of their fathers.

It is by means of men labouring for one another that the deſigns of Providence are accompliſhed: And when we embrace, with ſimplicity of heart, the opportunities which are within our ſphere, to guide the induſ- try or to aſſiſt the exertions of a good man's family, we fulfil an important branch of our perſonal duties, and are " fellow-work-

" ers together with God." The extent of our uſefulneſs is not limited by the particular advantages which the individuals derive from us, but reaches to all the diſtant conſequences of their virtue and proſperity in the world.

Every man can diſcern the opportunities of being uſeful in this department of duty which ariſe out of his own ſituation; and the fidelity with which he embraces them muſt be left to his underſtanding and his conſcience. No man's condition allows him to do all the good which might be done, or to give all the help which the families of worthy men require. It is an object as much of duty as of prudence, to ſelect the caſes in which our endeavours ſhall be moſt productive, and in which the means we poſſeſs ſhall be moſt effectually uſed to fill up our portion of " the la-" bour of love."

It is obvious that thoſe who have been deprived of their parents in their infancy, and who have been caſt on the care of Providence without culture and without wealth,

wealth, have peculiar claims on our beneficence. Their helpleſs condition, added to their fathers' prayers and alms, and to the promiſes of God, are irreſiſtible arguments with a faithful and benevolent mind.

But a father from whom his children receive the benefit both of inſtruction and example, is often incapacitated, by the narrowneſs of his fortune, from beſtowing on them thoſe liberal advantages which are ſuited to their talents, and to the condition in which he has lived. In this caſe much good may be done at a little expence, by the wiſe and affectionate counſel of men who are more converſant than he can be in the buſineſs of the world, or by their patronage, or by a ſmall aſſiſtance from a liberal hand, at the proper ſeaſon, and in the form ſuited to his condition.

Though thoſe who enjoy proſperity, and have no families of their own to ſhare it, can do more than other men, the condition of human life allows few individuals to take on themſelves the charge of another

another man's children. But the united exertions of benevolent men can accompliſh the ends to which their ſeparate endeavours are unequal. Public inſtitutions for the purpoſe of enſuring to the children the inheritance of their fathers, collect into one channel the counſels and beneficence of individuals, whoſe diſpoſitions to be uſeful, or whoſe means of uſefulneſs in this department, are too limited to find their proper application in private life. The poor widow caſts in her mite, with the rich who make an offering to purify their wealth. The ſilent beneficence which ſhuns the light, is added to the effects of public liberality, without departing from the path of "alms which are done in ſe-"cret;" the proſperous man liſtens to the admonitions of his conſcience, while the multitude around him ſanctify their gains, and "give God the praiſe;" and rich men who die conſcious that more beneficence was due than they have ſhewn, can leave an offering behind them worthy of their

better

better impreſſions, to help the unhappy and the fatherleſs in the world.

I do not pretend to give a full enumeration of caſes, which every man's underſtanding and his heart will ſuggeſt to him; but I have made theſe obſervations, becauſe they coincide preciſely with the objects of the benevolent inſtitution which gives occaſion to this annual meeting.

"THE Society for the benefit of the "Sons of the Clergy," was inſtituted at Edinburgh in the beginning of February Seventeen hundred and ninety. Its general object is, to form a permanent fund, by means of ſubſcriptions, donations, bequeſts, or contributions, the annual revenue of which ſhall be applied to aſſiſt the Sons of Miniſters of the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland, in acquiring the education which is ſuited to the rank in the country which their fathers hold, and thoſe profeſſional qualifications which are neceſſary to bring them forward into active employments. The advantages of the inſtitution are to be extended, without limitation, to every

every diſtrict of the kingdom, and to young men intended for all the different profeſſions. No diſtinctions can be made, but ſuch as are neceſſary in diſcriminating the circumſtances of thoſe who expect the aid of the Society, and in the impartial ſelection of caſes in which the greateſt good can be done at the leaſt expence. Other advantages, beſides pecuniary aids, may be expected from the united endeavours of the reſpectable men whom this inſtitution hath aſſociated, who have no other object than to be uſeful to the families of miniſters, and who pledge themſelves to the public to embrace every opportunity to aſſiſt their talents, and to promote their ſucceſs in life. The benefits which individuals ſhall derive from the inſtitution will not be confined to themſelves, but in their conſequences will reach every member of their fathers' families, whom their proſperity or their exertions can aſſiſt.

The Society have confined their firſt attention to the Sons of the Clergy. But they have reſerved power to themſelves, when

when the increaſe of their capital ſhall render it prudent, to extend a ſimilar aid to the *Daughters* of Miniſters, to enable them alſo to acquire the advantages ariſing from uſeful employments.

They have the beſt reaſons to be aſſured that the general deſign has received the approbation of the public. From the firſt day of the inſtitution, their funds have been gradually increaſing; a very conſiderable addition has been made to them ſince the laſt annual meeting; and ſince that period, too, his Majeſty has been pleaſed to grant his royal charter, conſtituting the Society into a legal corporation; which, beſides the authority which it gives to the inſtitution, intitles them to hold property in the country, and to receive legacies, bequeſts, and donations, according to the benevolence of the public.

It has been an object of their utmoſt attention, to ſecure the purity of management, and the faithful and impartial application of the funds of the Society; and they perſuade themſelves, that the precau-

tions which have been taken will not be ineffectual. They truſt in the providence of God, that the objects they have in view ſhall be ſecured by their perſeverance, and by the continued favour of the public; and they have the greateſt encouragement in obſerving the many proſperous inſtitutions of benevolence around them, which have riſen from ſmall beginnings into uſeful and permanent eſtabliſhments.

I think it unneceſſary to ſay more. Every thing elſe which belongs to the ſubject will be found in the printed accounts of the Society.

The livings of the clergy of this church are known to be inadequate both to the condition of the country, and to the importance of their rank and office among their fellow-citizens. No body of men, conſiſting of the ſame numbers, have better ſupported their reputation for purity of morals or faithful labours, for liberal knowledge and public uſefulneſs, or for private and domeſtic virtues; and I am perſuaded I ſpeak both to your underſtandings

ſtandings and to your affections, when I add, that from the general character and fidelity which they muſt be allowed to poſſeſs, their children are well intitled among their brethren to reap the inheritance of the faithful.

Now, may the Lord God of heaven and earth, and Jeſus Chriſt, the great Shepherd of the flock, bleſs and proſper this inſtitution, for the ſake of our brethren, and of the children who are born to us, and of many generations after we ſhall be gathered to our fathers.

ACCOUNT

OF THE

SOCIETY INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE

SONS OF THE CLERGY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THIS Society was inſtituted in the beginning of February 1790, and, in the courſe of frequent meetings ſince that period, has received the acceſſion of a number of reſpectable Gentlemen as members; has fixed the ſpecific objects which are to be purſued; and has deliberately formed the rules of its conſtitution.

The Society conſiſts chiefly, though not wholly, of Miniſters Sons. Of this deſcription are,

Robert Blair, Eſq. Solicitor General.
Joſeph Williamſon, Eſq. Advocate.
Niel Fergusſon, Eſq. Advocate.
William Craig, Eſq. Advocate.
W. Robertſon, Eſq. Procurator for the Church.
Mr John Bonar, Solicitor of Exciſe.

Mr

Mr Robert Forreſter,
Mr Andrew Bonar, } Bankers.
Mr Alexander Bonar,
Mr George Cumin, Writer to the Signet.
Mr William Creech.
Mr John Gloag.
Dr James Hamilton.
Profeſſor Dugald Stewart.
Sir H. Moncreiff-Wellwood, Bart.
Rev. Mr R. Walker.
Dr William Gloag.
Dr Thomas Hardy.
Dr John Hill.
Mr Archibald Gibſon.
Mr Adam Rolland.

To which are added, in conſequence of the arrangement after mentioned,

Profeſſor Adam Ferguſon.
Dr Alexander Carlyle.
Mr Alexander Young, Writer to the Signet.
Rev. Mr Thomas Randal.

In the Society are likewiſe the following Gentlemen, who, though not the Sons of Miniſters, are inclined to take a part in this plan of benevolence, viz.

Right Hon. Henry Dundas, one of his Majeſty's Principal Secretaries of State.

Right

Right Hon. the Lord Advocate of Scotland.
The Right Hon. James Stirling, Lord Provoſt of Edinburgh.
William Ramſay, Eſq; of Barnton.
The Hon. Henry Erſkine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.
Dr Henry Grieve.
Mr John Tawſe.
Mr William Simpſon.
Sir William Forbes, Bart.
Mr William Ker.
Mr George Kinnear.
His Grace the Duke of Buccleugh.

The Plan of the Society is formed on the following Views.

THAT the period in which the families of Clergymen feel moſt urgently the need both of friends and of pecuniary aid, is that which commences with the introduction of their Sons, either to an univerſity or to buſineſs, and terminates with their eſtabliſhment in their reſpective profeſſions.

That many of the Miniſters of this Church living at great diſtances from the ſeats either of

of univerſities or of buſineſs, poſſeſs incomes which, in the preſent ſtate of the country, are inadequate to the purpoſes of procuring for their ſons either the literary or profeſſional education which might enable them to come forward with credit and ſucceſs in the world.

That the Sons of Clergymen, from domeſtic tuition and example, have in general very advantageous means of receiving, in their early years, the impreſſions of virtue and honour, together with the rudiments of liberal knowledge; and that of courſe the public intereſt may be promoted, by enabling this claſs of young men to obtain their ſhare in the reſpectable ſituations of life.

The Society do not mean to limit their protection and aid to ſuch as look forward to any particular profeſſion. They are ſenſible that education in an univerſity is an object which many Clergymen wiſh to obtain for their Sons, as a matter of eſſential importance for various employments in life.——They are diſpoſed to give the full ſhare of their countenance and aid to this object, more eſpecially as it appears to them to be of great conſequence to this country, that the Sons of Miniſters ſhould obtain every encouragement

ragement to follow the profeſſion of their fathers. At the ſame time, young men entering into buſineſs, which may not require attendance at an univerſity, will be conſidered as alſo entitled to attention and aſſiſtance. It may be proper to add, that, in the caſes of education for any of the learned profeſſions, the Society mean to give no ſpecific preference in favour of one univerſity above others.

The objects of this Society are wholly different from thoſe of the Widows Fund. That excellent inſtitution fully anſwers its purpoſe; but its benefits to children in general are eventual and limited, as orphans alone can draw from it, and that only in certain caſes; their claims depending upon the circumſtances of their age, or of their fathers having ſurvived their mothers; and in all ſuch caſes, where the families are numerous, the ſhare which falls to each child becomes very inconſiderable in the diviſion.

The Society are endeavouring, by means of ſubſcriptions, to form a permanent fund, the revenue of which is to be applied for the benefit of the Sons of the Clergy; and they hope that it may be in their power, not only to afford pecuniary aid, but to give ſuch other proofs of their

their attention to this deſcription of young men as circumſtances may require.

The limitation of the views of the Society to the Sons of Clergymen at that period of life which intervenes between the concluſion of an ordinary ſchool-education and the eſtabliſhment of the young men in their profeſſions, was adopted by the Society for ſtrong reaſons, which they hope will meet with the approbation of the public.

By this limitation they will be able, from the ſame funds, to give more complete and effective aid within the ſphere of their attention, than they could have done upon a more comprehenſive plan.

The Society certainly reſolve that the Daughters as well as the Sons of Clergymen ſhall reap the benefits of the inſtitution, as ſoon as the ſtate of their funds ſhall render ſuch an extenſion of their plan practicable and prudent. They look forward to a time when they may have it in their power to aſſiſt them alſo to acquire the profeſſional education, which ſhall qualify them for proſecuting uſeful and active employments; and they flatter themſelves that the period is not very diſtant when ſomething effectual ſhall be done in this department.

At preſent, however, it is of importance to obſerve, that the pecuniary aid by which the young men are to be brought forward into life, is more eſſentially advantageous to the families of Clergymen, than the ſame, or greater ſums, employed in any other way; and that in general, one of the ſureſt modes by which the ſituation of the Daughters, and of the whole families of Clergymen may be improved, is, by removing thoſe obſtacles to the ſucceſs of the Sons, which at preſent are, in many caſes, inſurmountable by their own efforts; and by putting it in their power to become the protectors of the other branches of their fathers families.

CONSTITUTION.

The conſtitution has been formed in conſequence of mature deliberation, and of full diſcuſſion in many ſucceſſive meetings. The object in view of every member in ſettling its arrangement, was to guard the adminiſtration in all future times, on two points, 1. That it ſhould be regular, and in no caſe expoſed to the hazards of neglect or of precipitation. 2. That it ſhould be pure, and ſhould never incur either the cenſure or the ſuſpicion of partiality. The firſt of theſe objects is to be obtained only by a permanent

nent body of truſtees; the ſecond, by a public court of controul; and both together ſecured by an executive committee, formed by the mutual nomination of the more permanent and the more variable boards.

There are therefore three deſcriptions of perſons inveſted with powers in this inſtitution:

1*ſt*, The Society. This body conſiſts at preſent of the Gentlemen whoſe names have been already mentioned, and means to add conſiderably to its number by election from the liſt of ſubſcribers. The Society direct the management of the capital ſtock in reſpect of loans and ſecurities; authoriſe the receipt and diſburſement of money; chuſe their proportion of members of the committee after mentioned, and at ſtated meetings review its reports; while at occaſional, as well as ſtated meetings, they take a general charge of the intereſt of the ſcheme.

2*dly*, The Subſcribers at large, aſſembled in an annual meeting. The Subſcribers are to be invited, by public advertiſement, to meet after an annual ſermon, which is to be regularly preached. The accounts of the Society, both in the receipt and diſtribution, are to be laid before them; in order that the publicity of the pro-

ceedings may inſure the purity of the adminiſtration. The Subcribers are then alſo to be invited to nominate, from among their own number, their proportion of the committee of management; without being limited in their choice to ſuch as are, or ſuch as are not, members of the Society.—But when the Subſcribers ſhall chooſe perſons who are not already members of the Society, they ſhall by ſuch nomination become members thereof for four years, which is the period during which the members of the committee individually may remain in the management: It being ſtill in the power of the *Society*, as vacancies may occur, to *elect* the ſame men members of their own body, ſo that they may continue to hold their ſeats in the Society, after the term of their charge in the committee is expired.—It is further ſpecified in the arrangement of the conſtitution, that every Subſcriber to the amount of two guineas ſhall have a voice in the ſaid general annual meeting, for the term of three years: And every Subſcriber of five guineas ſhall have a voice therein for ſeven years; and Subſcribers for the ſum of ſeven guineas and upwards ſhall have a voice therein for life *. And it is underſtood and provided,

* To prevent miſtakes, it is proper to mention, that ſubſcription to this fund implies no annual burden, nor any obligation but to the payment of the ſpecific ſum ſubſcribed.

That different ſums, ſubſcribed at different times by the ſame perſons, ſhall be reckoned in the ſame manner as if they had been originally ſubſcribed in one ſum.

3*dly*, The Committee of Management. This Committee conſiſts of nine Gentlemen; four to be choſen by the Society, and four by the general meeting of Subſcribers who are not members of the Society; together with the preſes of the Society for the year; a new preſes being choſen annually. As it is obviouſly requiſite that at all times this Committee ſhould chiefly conſiſt of Gentlemen who are in the train of the buſineſs, the whole Committee cannot be renewed every year; and on the other ſide, as there would be a viſible impropriety in continuing the ſame perſons in this charge for an indefinite time, it is provided, That the members named to the Committee, excepting the preſes, ſhall hold their places therein for four years. It is underſtood, however, that, for the firſt three years of the ſcheme, this regulation muſt admit of an exception, viz. that at the end of the firſt year two members ſhall retire from the Committee, and that theſe ſhall be, one of the Gentlemen nominated by the Society, and one of thoſe choſen by the Subſcribers; their places to be filled by others who may be appointed by theſe bodies reſpectively. In like manner,

manner, at the end of the ſecond and of the third years, two, as above ſtated, ſhall retire each year, and their places will fall to be ſupplied in the ſame mode. In the fourth and ſubſequent years, two, as above deſcribed, ſhall retire regularly by rotation; whence, at each general annual meeting, one new member of the Committee will fall to be choſen by the Society, and one by the Subſcribers.

Before this Committee, the applications for aid are to be laid; they are to diſcuſs the preference of claims, to ſpecify the ſums proper to be granted in each inſtance, and to deliver regular reports to the Society.

By this whole ſyſtem of regulation and controul, the public will poſſeſs the beſt pledges which the nature of the caſe can admit, and will have the ſtrongeſt grounds of confidence, that this ſcheme of benevolence ſhall continue to be conducted with all the attention, fidelity, and honour, which may enſure that ſucceſs in doing good to the Sons of the Clergy, which is the only wiſh of all concerned.

The firſt general meeting of the Society and Subſcribers together, was held in the Merchants Hall, Edinburgh, on the 31ſt of May 1791.

Since

Since that time his Majeſty has been pleaſed to grant his Royal Charter, conſtituting the Society into a legal Corporation, by the ſtyle and title of "The Society for the Benefit of the Sons of the Clergy of the Eſtabliſhed Church of Scotland." This has placed the Society on a more reſpectable footing than the voluntary aſſociations of individuals, and by enabling them to hold property in the country, and to receive legacies, bequeſts, and donations, will, they are perſuaded, contribute very effectually to render the advantages of the inſtitution certain and permanent.

In the courſe of the year a conſiderable addition has been made to the funds. In May 1791 the ſtock amounted to L. 1060; whereof upwards of L. 900 was then placed at the intereſt of 4 per cent in the Royal Bank. At the ſecond general meeting of the Society and Subſcribers, held on the 29th of May laſt, the amount of the ſtock was L. 1566, 9 s. of which L. 1410 was in the Royal Bank.

At that meeting, after the production of their books, the Society intimated to the Subſcribers, That they had made choice of the Right Honourable James Stirling, Lord Provoſt of Edinburgh, to be the Preſident of the Society for the year

year enſuing; That Dr Hardy, a member of the Society, going out of the annual Committee by rotation, they had in his room elected Mr John Gloag merchant in Edinburgh; and that Dr John Hill, one of the members of the Committee nominated by the Subſcribers, going out alſo by rotation, it now fell to the Subſcribers to name another in his place. The Subſcribers immediately made choice of the Reverend Mr Thomas Randall in room of Dr Hill. The following Gentlemen are therefore the Committee for the year.

The Right Honourable James Stirling, Lord Provoſt of Edinburgh, Preſes.
Sir Henry Moncreiff-Wellwood, Baronet.
William Craig, Eſq. Advocate.
Andrew Bonar, Eſq.
John Gloag, Eſq.
Dr Adam Ferguſon.
Dr Alexander Carlyle.
Mr Alexander Young.
Rev. Mr Thomas Randall.

The Society took the advice of the Subſcribers, reſpecting the period of commencing the diſtribution of the revenue; when it was unanimouſly agreed, that as the fund was as yet inadequate to any effective operation on a ſcheme of ſuch extent,

tent, the diſtribution ought not to commence, until the capital ſtock ſhould have conſiderably encreaſed beyond its preſent amount.

In the mean time, it will give ſatisfaction to the friends of the Society to know, that ſeveral additions have been made to the fund even ſince the 29th of May; and that, from information received while this account is printing, they have the beſt reaſons to expect an acceſſion to their capital, which will enable them to begin the diſtribution at a much earlier period than could have been reaſonably thought of at that time.

Subſcriptions are received by

Meſſrs. Mansfield, Ramſay, and Co. Edin.
Meſſrs. Bertram, Gardiner, and Co. do.
Sir William Forbes, J. Hunter, and Co. do.
Sir H. Moncreiff-Wellwood, Bart. do.
Mr John Gloag, do.
Mr William Creech, do.
Or by Miniſters of Preſbytery-ſeats throughout Scotland.

The money ſubſcribed is to be paid to Mr Alexander Bonar, treaſurer to the Society, at the Banking-houſe of Meſſrs. Mansfield, Ramſay, and Co. Edinburgh.

Edin. 22d June, 1792.

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